

**AMENDMENTS****In The Claims**

Please cancel claims 7-9 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

10. (amended) A carbon black, characterized by:

- A1  
bub
- (i) being coated at least in part by a layer of aluminum oxide and/or hydroxide;
  - (ii) having a specific BET surface area of between 30 and 400 m<sup>2</sup>/g;
  - (iii) having an average particle size (by mass), d<sub>w</sub>, of between 20 and 400 nm; and
  - (iv) having an ultrasound disagglomeration rate, α, greater than 1x10<sup>-3</sup> μm<sup>-1</sup>/s.

A2  
bub

22. (amended) A process for reinforcing a diene rubber composition, comprising incorporating into the composition a carbon black of Claim 10.

Please add new claims as follows:

A3  
bub

23. (new) The process of Claim 22, wherein the carbon black is incorporated in the composition by mixing in an internal mixer.

24. (new) The process of Claim 22 further comprising subsequently curing the composition by vulcanization.